

# White Paper Report

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# French Pamphlet Planning Project: White Paper - Final Performance Report

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## Project Activities

Over the course of the project, planning participants carried out the following activities:

- completed individual collection assessments and environmental scan data reports;
- collected and shared examples of humanities portals for use in planning purposes including the newly released *French Revolution Digital Archive* from Stanford University Libraries, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (<http://frda.stanford.edu/>), and *A Colony in Crisis: The Saint-Domingue Grain Shortage of 1789 Translated and curated primary sources from an episode in the history of Saint-Domingue* from the University of Maryland (<https://colonyincrisis.wordpress.com/>); and,
- gathered assessment data from participants and scholars, and shared all materials from prior meetings and discussions via the Project Management workspace (<http://workspace.crl.edu/display/CFPP/Home>) hosted by the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) and through an email list ([GRN-CIFNAL-FPP@listserv.crl.edu](mailto:GRN-CIFNAL-FPP@listserv.crl.edu)).

Other activities included the following:

- The FPP Scholarly Coordinator (Audrey Viguiet) completed a site visit to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) where she gathered French Pamphlet collections data for contribution to the integrated environmental scan document.
- The Newberry Library shared institutional records (~30,000) of fully-cataloged French Pamphlet Collections completed through a Council on Library and Information Resources grant award.
- The Newberry Library and University of Maryland Libraries conducted digitization to gather assessment information to inform development on future project phases.

## Accomplishments

As initially proposed, the products and outcomes resulting from project planning from 2013 to 2014 were expected to include results that now can be seen as falling into one of two core areas:

## **I. Creating, Collecting, and Sharing Information:**

- Collaborative data points of total pamphlet holdings in print, microfilm and in digital format
- Definitive data concerning the utility of existing shared pamphlet collections, catalog descriptions and digitized facsimiles
- Environmental Scan Report detailing the current situation among French revolutionary pamphlet collections and holding institutions vis-à-vis cataloging quality and efforts, and digital conversion efforts
- White Paper describing planning processes, experiences and lessons learned

## **II. Cultivating a Community of Practice to steward collections of French Pamphlets:**

- Expanded international collaborative network of well-informed project partners with common knowledge about project parameters and goals
- Strategic Plan for establishing a French Pamphlet Digital Portal, including workflows and timeframes for creation of a collaborative portal which organizes resulting project data and information for improved management of future initiatives; and includes workflows and timeframes for creation and maintenance of a CRL online resource linking researchers to the full-text of all existing digitized partner pamphlets

The French Pamphlet Planning Project participants have successfully completed the planning and preparation work, including creating, collecting, and sharing data on holdings and the environmental scan as planned. For data collection, the planning project also was able to support digitization by two partner institutions. Selected pamphlets were digitized to gather data on the resulting local workflows, concerns, and processes to support future French Pamphlet digitization activities by other partnering institutions.

The original grant proposal anticipated a strategic plan that would include two parts: a project information portal or resource hub and a French Pamphlet Digital Portal. The project information resource hub is in place and functioning well. Many resources have been made available online and in-process materials will be available, as a result of ongoing support, for use by project participants. CRL through its Project Management System for French Pamphlets (<http://workspace.crl.edu/display/CFPP/Home>) makes these resources available through a group within CIFNAL (<http://www.crl.edu/grn/cifnal>) for use in ongoing work on French Pamphlets and related initiatives. Additional organizational synergy results from CRL's hosting of the community email list ([GRN-CIFNAL-FPP@listserv.crl.edu](mailto:GRN-CIFNAL-FPP@listserv.crl.edu)).

During planning project discussions, project partners agreed that CIFNAL should continue to be the lead organization for serving as the core community home for ongoing cooperative work and to support future projects planning. The findings of the planning project showed the value of an even stronger connection with CIFNAL, as opposed to the more limited benefits of sustaining a more discrete, smaller group focused on pamphlets alone. This decision resulted from learning about the many potential connections and the tremendous value of contextualized and thematic collections. Accessing pamphlets can enhance research, scholarship and teaching by also having access to other complementary materials.

In conducting the planning project, the findings resulted in strategy recommendations divergent from the original plans for a French Pamphlet Digital Portal (a technical portal that would promote access to a single version of any given pamphlet). Alternatively, future strategies for meeting the critical need to cultivate a community of practice surrounding French Pamphlets, and for providing ongoing cooperative support for the many potential projects related to accessing and mining French Pamphlets has become the priority.

Communities of practice are defined in terms of their structural characteristics, being associated and connected with a domain of knowledge, a notion of community, and a shared understanding of common practice. In terms of French Pamphlets, the community of practice is the community focused on supporting, using, and promoting French Pamphlets. The core community includes institutions holding French Pamphlet collections, and those who support related collections and connections across collections; as well as those connecting to these primary resources, including individuals from research and teaching communities. Over the course of the project, project participants noted the value of being part of the known and identified community for executing planning activities as a way to recognize and promote the value of French Pamphlets, as unique resources and in relation to other resources and initiatives.

Communities of practice are focused on specific practices. In terms of French Pamphlets, these are practices that relate to optimally supporting, using, and promoting French Pamphlets through a variety of methods to continuously build community resources.

Project planning findings include the importance of providing access to multiple pamphlet copies and variants. The initial project plan had proposed to create a centralized portal with a possible vision of selective digitization of a single item as representative for all similar items with the same title. However assessment findings emphasized the importance of description and access to multiple copies, regardless of what may appear to be a single title. These findings are similar to those authored by Matthew Kirschenbaum and Sarah Werner in their recent analysis of similar digital projects, highlighting the importance of the richness and variety of print publishing that is not adequately representable by singular versions:

“Digitization projects often let the digitization of one book represent the entire print edition of that work. *Early English Books Online* (EEBO) claims that it “contains more than 125,000 titles” listed in STC, Wing, and the Thomason Tracts. But what EEBO provides is access to digitized microfilms of copies of more than 125,000 titles. Especially in the hand-press period, with its proliferation of variant states, including stop-press changes and cancels, a copy is not necessarily representative of an edition. To choose but one example, the EEBO instance of the 1791 edition of the Earl of Rochester’s *Poems &c on several occasions* (R1756, to use its Wing number) is taken from the Huntington copy of the work, a copy that includes the cancellanda of leaves D3 and D7, rather than the cancels that were to replace them. (The later state of the *Poems* omits the last stanza of “Love to a Woman,” presumably out of the same prudishness about sexuality that was responsible for the cuts made throughout the collection.) There is nothing in EEBO’s record to indicate that this copy is anything other than a surrogate for the edition. But the textual history of Rochester’s poems is complicated enough without adding in confusion about states of editions.” (419). (Kirschenbaum, Matthew and Sarah

Werner. "Digital Scholarship and Digital Studies: The State of the Discipline." *Book History*, V. 17. 2014: 406-458. 10.1353/bh.2014.0005.  
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/bh/summary/v017/17.kirschenbaum.html>.)

Even when not unique, the volume of surviving editions among partner institutions was found to be significant. Project partners reported the value of accessing pamphlets where uniqueness is not indicative of importance. Kelsey Corlett-Rivera shared the response from Douglas P. McElrath (Senior Curator and Manager, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries), when explaining how reprinted pamphlets show greater importance. McElrath remarked about one pamphlet: "The significance is that this pamphlet generated a lot of interest and received the equivalent of an 18th century retweet." (June 25, 2014).

## Audiences

Current and future audiences for the implementation projects and phases for supporting a French Pamphlets community of practice include institutions holding French Pamphlets, those holding French Research Collections and related collections, and institutions and groups of researchers and professors with courses that connect to and can utilize French Pamphlets. Based on the work carried out by the University of Maryland as part of the planning project, project partners assessed the opportunity to use WorldCat as the "project portal" for maintaining records with links going to all versions of digital facsimiles hosted on a variety of institution websites. The value of using WorldCat to pull these records together was deemed an excellent option to promote access to the many resources available from a wide range of institutions. Using WorldCat in this manner will position the project for expansion into new project areas such as specific topics on French history or other areas, without being limited to a specific format or time period, while still being capable of faceted and specific searching. Further, the use of WorldCat will enable the promotion and connection of resources to serve an overall broad group of potential audiences.

Audiences also include those participating, now and in the future, in the community of practice related to French Pamphlets. In recognizing the value of the potentially large community for all the various possible activities relating to French Pamphlets, planning project participants also identified the need for the development of future specific projects that will be narrowly focused with defined roles for all partners and participants. Thus, planning project participants determined that the strategic approach for building a community of practice required a two-part structure: 1) ongoing activities performed by the full community of practice, and 2) defined specific projects for self-selected participants.

For the larger community of practice, it was determined that the French Pamphlet Project discussions should occur and be shared in the larger CIFNAL discussions for representation and inclusion. Given that community needs for supporting French Pamphlets will be programmatic or ongoing, contributions should be made through the community within CIFNAL. Communicating and coordinating French Pamphlet activities through CIFNAL also provides the framing and connections for continuous planning, development, execution, and sharing of findings resulting from specific projects. Specific projects may include projects at one or more

local institutions where experiences and best practices can later be shared through CIFNAL for the benefit of the full community.

For executing specific French Pamphlet related projects and project phases, project and technical leaders (whether one or multiple institutions) and partners will be clearly identified, with specific roles and responsibilities for all leaders and contributing partners. Project management processes including project charters and memoranda of agreements will be used whenever appropriate to ensure all roles and responsibilities are known and communicated.

## Evaluation

Throughout the project, the project team at UF in collaboration with CRL sought feedback and input for adjusting planning activities to meet the needs of participants. Face-to-face meetings were determined to be more productive than the planned virtual meetings. Constant adjustments were made given the various changes in personnel at institutions, and the various sizes and statuses of collections. As a planning project, the project activities, findings, and results were collected on an ongoing basis. Information collected was analyzed and used to cumulatively inform and develop project activities. The final results of this project build towards larger, future projects and project phases.

## Continuation of the Project

Next steps include future French Pamphlet meetings of planning project participants and others from CIFNAL, which will be scheduled after January 2015. Expected outcomes for future meetings include plans to submit a major grant proposal in summer 2015 to the National Endowment for the Humanities or another sponsoring agency, which will include collection focused work to catalog, digitize, and further support French Pamphlet collection holdings. Current discussions are open to a single institution, joint, or large collaborative proposal as best meets current needs and capacities for the proposal. Whether subsequent activities include an individual or shared grant proposal, planning participants have affirmed their interest and commitment in supporting activities which also simultaneously support community needs and the four major goals for cultivating and growing the community of practice.

For the core values and future goals a broader participant pool, activities to develop the community of practice, and the initiation of various specific projects will be ongoing as supported and coordinated through CIFNAL.

## Long Term Impact

The planning project participants identified a core goal being to continue to build and strengthen the community of institutions holding French Pamphlets for a variety of activities. The institutions involved in the planning project identified another a core goal of building on existing success with the planning project for different results, including to increase interest in pamphlet collections, bring classes into special collections, and collaborate with local and external researchers.

In conducting the planning project, the changed vision concerning the portal resulted from shared values in terms of the need for portals or other new technical constructs to support added value features beyond findability. In planning for particular projects to support community needs, these shared goals have been identified:

- I. Cataloged and digitized pamphlet collections will be accessible through WorldCat
- II. Promote the use and understanding of pamphlets, including creating Digital Humanities projects, that bring together digitized pamphlets on a specific topic to prepare for future translations, annotations, scholarly context, and opportunities for student assignments and hands-on projects
- III. Develop collections and scholarly resources through projects that connect a wide variety and often rich subject-related materials, growing complementary collections
- IV. Develop projects that initiate and enable new projects and approaches, such as topic modeling and prosopography

Partners recognized that many sponsor agencies are no longer funding cataloging and digitization (<http://www.acrl.org/ULS/?p=923>), and instead are placing a greater emphasis on supporting phases once cataloging and digitization have been completed, including those related to Digital Humanities activities. While partners acknowledged these changes in priorities, they affirmed the importance and value of cataloging and digitizing local collections and affirmed the shared commitment to working to find local and shared resources for this critical work.

As a planning project, the purpose of the project was to collect data and conduct analysis for planning and preparation for future projects. The project was proposed with a given landscape in mind. By the time the project was awarded, the landscape had radically changed, especially in light of activities by institutions like the Newberry Library which cataloged thousands of their French pamphlets. Best practices and lessons learned during the project period include embracing change and remaining flexible to best benefit from improved conditions and new resources. While this project began as one with a major connection to CIFNAL and with many collaborative partners, greater emphasis on the larger potential community developed over the course of the project. Emphasizing the substantial and critical role played by the community in developing any future collaborative project is reflected in the change of project direction. With the importance of community, greater scaffolding to support the clarity of roles and responsibilities, following more conventional practices from project management including the use of project charters, will support even greater communication ease and productivity in the future.

## Grant Products

Shared materials now available online include:

- Grant Proposal: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00012378/>
- Compiled environmental scan document: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00012378/00004>
  - (Includes Stanford environmental scan: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00003843/00001>)
- Project Team, Chicago 2013 Meeting Handout: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00003443/00001>
  - Meeting Report: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00003499/00001>
- BNF Scholarly Visit Itinerary: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00012378/00005/pdf>
- Newberry Library, MARC records: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00012378/00006/downloads>

- Partner meeting agenda for June 26, 2014 meeting:  
<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00012378/00009>